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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

NOVELTIES IN NAME CARDS.

BY LAURA B. STARR.



NAME cards have within the past few years attained a prominence never before reached. They serve a two-fold purpose: they are useful—in fact necessary—in the seating of guests without confusion, besides being pretty souvenirs, which in time to come will evoke tender memories of the day and occasion.

In giving dinners the majority of ladies, at least those who are not blessed with the inventive faculty or an artistic sense of the fitness of things, go to the most fashionable stationer and order the

requisite number of "the very latest name cards," without a thought of making the material or design a specialty. Professional designers are, of course, always on the alert to bring out something new for the delectation of their customers, but their best efforts lack the charm of articles wrought by special artists for special occasions, with no duplicates.

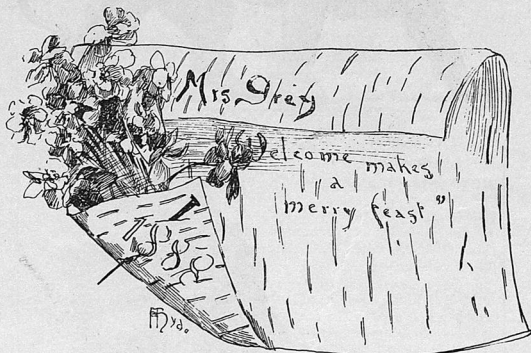
Nearly all American women are able to paint or sketch enough for the carrying out of a quaint conceit or merry thought, provided the conceit or thought found lodgment within their pretty heads; but in the rush and whirl of modern society there is little time for originating designs or carrying them out with needle or brush; the days are too short and social obligations too many to permit of either. So madam must perforce take the best the market affords in the regulation way.

Some ladies there are who have artistic skill and more time than money; to such there are endless possibilities in the way of way of decorating dinner tables, menu and name cards: they seize upon a new idea, and from it evolve an hundred, all having the charm of personality, and carry them out with taste and skill.

Imitation cabbages, roses, etc., with menu written on their hearts, have been as pretty and popular as any thing within the past few years, but the capricious public are weary of them as well as the stray rose petals, slices of cucumber or lemon which formed the name card to match.

A well-known society lady, living on the brow of one of the many hills gathered within the Golden Gate, has the reputation, not only by giving the best dinners, but of setting forth the most artistically arranged dinner table in San Francisco.

The menus, name cards and decorations are all the work of



her own hands, for, although she has unlimited means, she prefers to give a dash of originality to everything she does.

Some name cards used at one of her dinners were made of six inch squares of terra cotta cartridge paper, torn, not cut, leaving the edges a little rough, though not ragged. Diagonally across the card was placed a long, slender eucalyptus leaf, which had been allowed to take its own sweet will in drying, gilded on the underside; the leaves were of different sizes and shapes, no two alike. They were fastened to the cardboard with different

colored sealing-wax stamped with seals representing various well-known figures of mythology, the lady being the happy possessor of a fine collection of intaglios. One's own seal or initial might be used in place of these.

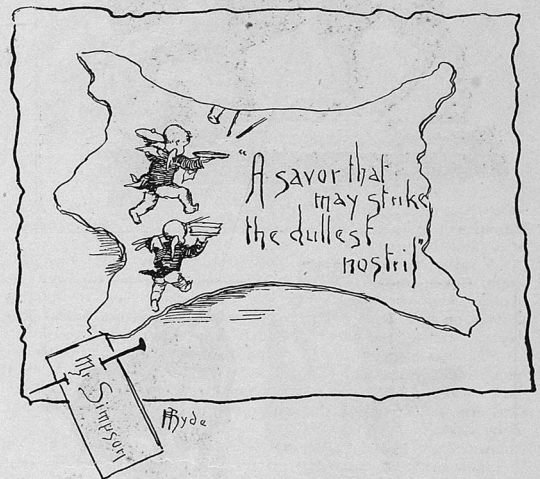
On the green side of the leaf which was uppermost, was written in gilt and green bronze the guest's name, above it the date; below on the right hand corner was a legend from some poet, or an original sentiment appropriate to the occasion, or some laughter provoking couplet.

If the hostess has the gift of rhyming, she can add wonderfully to the amusement of her guests, by inscribing something which pertains personally to each one, for we all the more enjoy things said or done for our special benefit.

Another card was done on parchment paper, rolled up and tied with narrow thongs of chamois-skin, which were attached to the scroll with wax and seal. At the left of the seal was the name, at the right appeared the date. Inside the scroll was an appropriate sentiment done with illuminated letters in different colored bronzes. A similar one might be made of Russia leather, embossing the outside with colors shading from a dull green to brown. This tied with a silken girdle, containing threads of all the colors used in engrossing and embossing, would make an exceedingly handsome name card; the only objection to it is that the odor might be disagreeable to some.

A dainty and exquisite card is made of a jagged piece of white or light tan colored kid fastened upon a rough white card. On this is etched a fancied design in water color together with the sentiment. The name is done in gilt letters on a tiny card which is attached to the larger one by thrusting a common pin through both.

An appropriate idea for a dinner card in winter, is one which



looks as though it were covered with icicles. A large square of rough edged paper is used, the name being formed of long irregular characters in sparkling powder which has the appearance of jagged and glittering frost-work. The lettering should be done in gold, silver, pale blue or violet, as black ruins the effect. Numberless variations of this idea may be worked out by that clever woman who is an adept with her brush or pen. This frost card is especially suitable for a Christmas dinner.

A California lady having some Eastern friends to dine on Christmas day, made her unique cards a lasting souvenir of the State as well as the day. Squares of red-wood bark an inch thick were used for the foundation. Upon this were grouped, in slight relief from their background, bunches of the gorgeous wild-flowers of California, and maidenhair fern which is also a child of nature in that country, all having been carefully pressed so as to retain their form and coloring; these were carelessly fastened with a silver cord upon which hung a chime of tiny bells.

Through an opening on the right side of the bark was thrust a loop of two-inch terra cotta ribbon, one end bore the guests name and date, upon the other end was written a Christmas rhyme, done in green bronze.

A set of Thanksgiving cards were made of thick squares of redwood bark and decorated in a similar manner with the exception of small vegetables—red and green peppers, small carrots, long slender beets and tiny turnips—being used in place of the pressed flowers. In the midst of this glowing product of the kitchen garden nestled a diminutive real bronze turkey. The gentlemen's cards bore a tiny champagne cooler in place of the turkey, and the ribbons were apple-green instead of terra cotta.

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Cards for a St. Valentine's luncheon were made of a sheet of Bath paper, folded diagonally through the center; a long slender arrow was thrust through one corner and caught by a silken cord. Cupids and love apples were used for decoration in addition to the name, date, etc.

Those to whom the redwood bark is an impossibility may utilize the birch bark, which is easily obtained in the East. A six or eight-inch square has the left hand corner folded over and caught with a long pin. This improvised cornucopia may hold a bunch of violets, forget-me-nots, or any other diminutive blossom. Care must be taken to use only such colors as will harmonize with the remainder of the table decorations, as nothing is so ruinous to the general effect as a mingling of ill-assorted colors in flowers.

The little round straw Japanese plaque may be utilized if one has not time for elaborate work. Tie an inch-wide ribbon

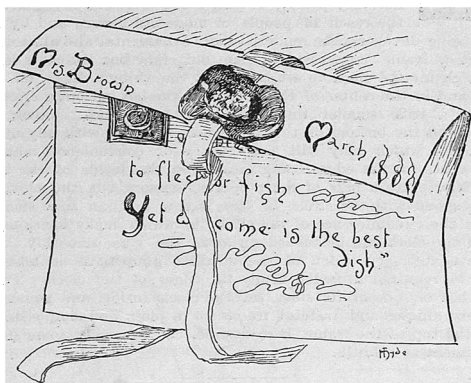


across the center, upon which inscribe the name and date. The ribbon will hold in place a small bunch of fairy faces—pansies, or a small posy of wild flowers.

A rather pretty idea is that of fastening the name card to a small wicker basket filled with bon-bons. One side presents an express company's tag, while the name and date are plainly written on the other. The basket is covered with a white satin napkin, with a Greek border edged in blue ink.

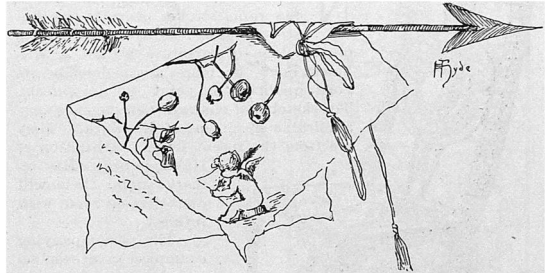
Small palettes of any finely polished wood make an effective background upon which to describe a fanciful conceit. Birch bark canoes, filled with sugar plums, to which is attached the card are not novelties, but still are pretty and artistic enough to be used.

An ingenious lady made use of some little dried crabs which she had gathered at the seashore the previous summer; the effect was wonderfully pretty, and exceedingly novel. The foundation was a piece of the pale green, smooth, heavy paper, used for water color and *passee partout* for pictures, measuring five by seven inches, long undulating lines to represent sea waves were painted with a deeper green. Pieces of pink silk netting, such as is used for evening dresses, were laid diagonally across the cards, crumpled a little to look as if they had been carelessly



dropped there. This was fastened at each end with a bow-knot of common twine, from the ends of which dangled small, flat, round pieces of cork bearing the name and date, all bronzed with red copper. Three or four crabs were used for each card;

these were scattered about irregularly and secured to the paper with a drop of glue. Bits of pressed seaweed would, if placed in the corners, add somewhat to the effect.



The same lady, being an adept with her brush, made for another dinner a card representing a small dainty volume. The covers were of parchment paper with the guest's name done in illuminated letters. The leaves were of silk bolting cloth; the title page bore a water color portrait of the guest; one of the inner leaves presented an original couplet, setting off in a whimsical manner some peculiarity of the guest—of course, this could only be done with a company of one's most intimate friends. The remaining leaf bore the hostess' name and the date of the dinner. The little volume was securely bound at the back with silken cords and fringed out tassels, a variety of colors being used.

Among the following quotations may be found something appropriate to any occasion:

- "What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?"
- "Be large in mirth. Anon will drink a measure the table round."
- "A cup for my friends, the next for good humor."
- "The past is gone, the future is to come."
- "He that will eat the kernel must crack the nut."
- "He lives at ease, who freely lives."
- "Thou feedest me with the very name of meat."
- "Methinks I feel new strength within me rise."



- "No bliss so great but cometh to an end."
- "He who lives well is learned enough."
- "Bread is the staff of life."
- "For joy is brighter and reverse less sure
To him who hath well dined the night before."
- "He scrupled not to eat against his better knowledge."
- "Variety alone gives joy;
The sweetest meats the soonest cloy."
- "So comes a reckoning when the banquets o'er,
The dreadful reckoning, and men smile no more."
- "I could scarce help regretting
To spoil such a delicate picture by eating."
- "Who rises from a feast with that keen appetite that he sits down?"
- "The daintiest fast, to make the end most sweet."
- "Hunger makes ev'rything sweet."
- "It is good for us to be here."
- "Appetite comes with eating."
- "Would'st thou both eat thy cake and have it?"
- "I give Thee thanks for every crop."
- "The bitter and the sweet."
- "Let us give thanks for favors past."
- "What's to come is still unsure."

Menu cards, which having fallen into disuse, except one large one which is placed before the host, may be made to match any of the name cards given. They should be twelve to fourteen inches long, eight to ten wide, with the menu done in old English or German text.